



(Credit: Hansoo Kim)

# AMBS window

Winter 2023 | Volume 33, Issue 1

## Leadership matters

From the President: David Boshart, PhD

In all the places I have traveled around the world in the past year, the message is the same: *Leadership matters, and AMBS is needed.* In the summer of 2021, we began asking church leaders a focus question: "What is the most meaningful thing AMBS can do to support current and future leaders for the church?"

The responses to that question are changing how we educate leaders. While our theological programs are very strong, we've come to understand that we need to give more attention to developing skills for practical administrative leadership and community engagement.

As part of this work, we are asking an important and foundational question in a new way: "What makes leadership *Anabaptist*?" This leads to two more important questions: "How is Anabaptist leadership understood in the global Anabaptist context?" and "When we have a clear picture of the values that make leadership *Anabaptist*, how can we be sure that the education we are offering results in effective Anabaptist leadership for the challenges leaders are facing today and will face tomorrow?"

Church leaders around the world have invited AMBS to provide leadership education due to our

historic scholarly tradition in service to the church and the Anabaptist witness of our many alumni. It's both an honor and humbling to

be asked to support the global Anabaptist community in strengthening the Anabaptist identity of leaders and congregations all around the world.

Our global engagements continue to widen and deepen. For the first time in AMBS history, the majority of our students are from outside of the United States and Canada. Whether studying on campus or at a distance, all of our students widen and deepen our thinking about effective Anabaptist leadership in several ways:

- Students from diverse communities offer case studies from places where the church is thriving
- (continued on p. 2)



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an important  
and foundational  
question in a  
new way: "What  
makes leadership  
*Anabaptist*?"

(above, l. to r.): These guest students were among 14 who took an AMBS course in South Korea in September via a new partnership between AMBS and the Nehemiah Institute for Christian Studies in Seoul: Sanghwan Ko, Hansoo Kim, J. Lee, Dongeun Kim, Youngsoo Kang, Core Adjunct Faculty James Krabill, KyeHyun Kim, Sun Ju Moon (MDiv 2011), Hyojin Chang, JuneHo Han.

# FROM THE PRESIDENT

(continued from p. 1)

and where it is struggling. These cases highlight what is required of leaders to meet the challenges of this time with resilience.

- Sharing experiences from many diverse contexts in our classrooms adds complexity to our understanding of the challenging issues the church is facing in many places.
- Engaging with students from many contexts reminds us that they come with vastly different kinds of preparation for the leadership roles to which they are being called. Offering graduate-level, undergraduate-level, nondegree, short- and long-term, face-to-face and distance-friendly theological education options are all necessary means of educating leaders for the church today.

## AMBS is responding to what we are hearing from church

### leaders with new programs and projects:

- When I travel as President of AMBS, I am curating oral interviews with Anabaptist church leaders in Mennonite World Conference to understand what *effective* Anabaptist leadership looks like in a wide range of contexts.
- The first cohort of students in our new **Doctor of Ministry in Leadership** program began studies in January (see p. 3). The new program will meet the goals of ministry leaders (1) who want to refresh their leadership skills after being in ministry for some time; (2) who attended non-Anabaptist seminaries and would like to study Anabaptist leader-

ship; and/or (3) who have been in general ministry for some time and would like to develop a particular specialization. The program's competency-based format aligns well with AMBS's existing educational philosophy of "knowing, doing and being." The curriculum also will invite students to think globally about what Anabaptist leadership means.

- In support of our new DMin, each Teaching Faculty member has been invited to contribute to a three-year **research and publishing project on the nature of Anabaptist leadership**.
- In 2023, we will develop a new **applied leadership curriculum** with a menu of flexible learning modules that will address practical administrative and organizational skills needed for the challenges the church is facing today. **Luis Tapia Rubio** (MDiv 2021) (see p. 6) will direct this initiative with the guidance and support of an advisory panel of church, business, organizational and local leaders along with members of our Teaching Faculty.

As you can see, we are listening to the church and attempting to respond to the most urgent and relevant needs that church leaders are naming.

AMBS has been given a wonderful calling to educate followers of Jesus to be leaders for God's reconciling mission in the world. But this work is not for the faint of heart. As **Jamie Pitts**, one of our professors, told me recently, "What we are doing at AMBS is hard, terrifying ... and it's really fun!" I completely agree, and on further reflection I would add that it is all three of these things — hard, terrifying and fun — at the same time, all the time! ●

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## AMBS Window

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A seminary of  
Mennonite Church USA and  
Mennonite Church Canada

(below, l. to r.): Incoming students Micheline Ilonga of the Democratic Republic of Congo and Amy Marshall of Pickerington, Ohio, during orientation in August 2022. (Credit: Peter Ringenberg)



(Credit: Rachel A. Fonseca)



## What to know

### AMBS's DMin in Leadership

In January, a cohort of eight students began studies in AMBS's new **Doctor of Ministry (DMin) in Leadership** degree — the only DMin in the United States to be deliberately developed with an Anabaptist framework. It's also the first DMin in the U.S. and Canada approved by the Association of Theological Schools to be designed from the outset as a competency-based program.

"We know from consultations with pastors and leaders in the church, as well as from feedback from our own alumni, that the church needs leaders who continually grow in specific competencies," said **Beverly Lapp**, EdD, Vice President and Academic Dean. "We've shaped and focused our new DMin in response to these needs. This program will enable ministry professionals to build on what they've gained from their prior studies and leadership experiences and will be an important part of our strategy to resource leadership for the church."

#### DMin Program Co-Directors named

**Dan Schrock**, DMin, and **Jewel Gingerich Longenecker**, PhD (MA 1992) (*pictured above*), began Sept. 19 as DMin Program Co-Directors. They're sharing the half-time position, overseeing the program's faculty and curriculum as well as guiding student advisory groups and doctoral research project committees. Both will continue in their existing AMBS roles — Jewel as Dean of Lifelong Learning and Dan as Core Adjunct Faculty in spiritual direction.

Here's why they stepped up to serve:

**Dan:** "This degree comes at a tender time in the life of the church, when what often worked well in the past will probably not work so well in the future. We are looking for fresh expressions of church life that engage the realities of our time. For such a time as this, we need leaders who have a higher degree of competence."

**Jewel:** "It felt natural and right to say 'yes' once I learned that Dan would be Co-Director. With his extensive experience in pastoral ministry, spiritual direction for leaders, and seminary teaching, I felt that my background in competency-based education, leadership theory, and administration of Lifelong Learning programs could be a helpful complement in the startup phase for this new degree." ●

— Annette Brill Bergstresser

### DMin program details

- **Designed for:** mid-career pastors and ministry leaders
- **Goal:** to strengthen students' leadership capacities for the advanced practice of ministry
- **Hours:** 32 credit hours
- **Length:** three years (9–12 credits per year)
- **Structure:** Students do most of their coursework online while based in their professional ministry or leadership context, coming to campus each January for one week of in-person coursework.
- **Process:** Using the question, "What more do I want to know, become or do as an Anabaptist leader?" students will create a **customized learning plan** to gain expertise in **five key competencies:** Anabaptist Leadership, Intercultural Leadership, Teaching Leadership, Change Leadership and Resilient Leadership.

They'll also take core leadership courses, develop a leadership portfolio and complete a doctoral research project. Throughout the program, they'll gain knowledge about leadership, apply it to their work, and reflect on how this experience is deepening their leadership identity and expertise.

- **Community support:** Each student will be part of a cohort and will work closely with a faculty mentor and an advisory ministry group.
- **Benefits for congregations:** DMin graduates will help their congregation/organization to:
  - be more resilient when unforeseen events happen;
  - adapt to intercultural relationships;
  - use thoughtful processes to navigate changes the church wants or needs to make;
  - deepen the church's biblical and theological insights;
  - strengthen its Anabaptist identity.
- In addition, the church benefits from having leaders who have fresh ideas and new enthusiasm for congregational life.
- **Cost:** The total cost is relatively low for doctoral studies. A congregation that budgets \$6,000/year for three years would help their leader cover most of the cost.
- **Application deadline:** Nov. 1 for the January 2024 cohort. See: [ambs.edu/dmin](http://ambs.edu/dmin)

## Meet our Journey graduates!

Six participants from Mennonite Church Canada, Mennonite Church USA and Evana congregations completed the **Journey Missional Leadership Development Program** in 2022. The distance-friendly undergraduate-level certificate program develops leaders centered in Jesus Christ for ministries in local churches and communities. It's designed for pastors, those exploring a call to ministry, church planters and lay leaders.

The program consists of online study, biweekly meetings with a mentor, and two in-person gatherings per year. It currently has 12 participants from the U.S., two from Canada, and two from Uganda.



**Charles Baraka** of Madison, Wisconsin, was ordained in Africa, where he led a church for seven years as senior pastor; in Madison, he preaches in different churches and is part of Madison Mennonite Church (Central District Conference, or CDC). He also works in the University of Wisconsin Hospital. His mentor was **Lavon Welty** (MDiv 1979) of Eighth Street Mennonite Church, Goshen, Indiana (CDC).

Charles is applying what he's learned in Journey to his work as CEO of Amahoro Ministries for Communities, a nonprofit organization he founded that works in Burundi, the Great Lakes Region of Africa, and Madison. This program is one way he is living out his calling to work for healing, peace and reconciliation.

"It's an opportunity to continue empowering other church leaders and Christians in different churches in Africa — to help them to be transformed and call them to transform others in their communities, country and the world," he said. "I know that God still has hope in the church. Through Journey, I can help my church spiritually and my community for God's glory."

(below, l. to r.):  
Journey  
participants  
Maciel  
Hernandez  
of Toronto,  
Ontario,  
and Bikash  
Shankhar of  
Evanston,  
Illinois, at  
a Weekend  
Learning Event  
in 2022.



**Ramon Lianez** of Wauseon, Ohio, began Dec. 1 as Associate Pastor of North Clinton Church in Wauseon (Evana). While participating in Journey, he was Co-Pastor at Central Mennonite in Archbold (Ohio Conference).

His mentor was **Gary Stuckey** of Inlet Mennonite Church in Wauseon (Ohio Conference).

**Dick Barrett**, Conference Minister for Ohio Conference, first suggested Journey to Ramon when he was going to Ohio Christian University, a Wesleyan school in Circleville.

"He felt I needed to get more faith formation in Anabaptist beliefs, and I totally agreed," Ramon said. "I went through the Journey program to get that. I felt I got that and so much more."

"I loved the fact that there were so many different people from different cultures and walks of life. I loved how we all gelled together and respected one another and asked some really tough questions out of love so we could grow. That was just phenomenal. The leaders and guest speakers would ask us questions and see where we were at, and help us grow as individuals and in the Word with an Anabaptist theology. I can't express how grateful I am for that to have been the way it was."



**Rebecca Riek** of Kitchener, Ontario, Canada, is currently involved in the Intercultural Committee of her congregation, First Mennonite Church in Kitchener (Mennonite Church Eastern Canada, or MCEC).

"We organize events and plan services that are multicultural, e.g., choosing songs in different languages to sing for worship or praying in different languages," she said. "I also work within my community as a faith leader to participate in praying during funeral services or events such as baptisms."

Rebecca is now enrolled in AMBS's distance-friendly Master of Divinity Connect program, majoring in Christian Faith Formation. Her Journey mentor was **Rebecca Yoder Neufeld** (MDiv 1981), also of First Mennonite.



**Janet P. Schumacher** of Bluffton, Ohio, is currently helping with pastoral care in her congregation, First Mennonite Church in Bluffton (CDC). Over the summer, she served as a guest speaker in

# Journey adapted for use in Southeast Asia

Through the leadership of AMBS alumnus **Jonah Yang** (MA 2018) of North Branch, Minnesota — in partnership with **David B. Miller**, DMin (MDiv 1993), Teaching Associate of the AMBS Church Leadership Center — the Journey program was adapted for use with a cohort of six Hmong-speaking students in Southeast Asia from 2019 to 2022. The group met in person three times over the three years and via Zoom during the pandemic. A final session in July–August 2022 included a closing graduation ceremony, with Jonah and David presiding.

Pictured at right are four Journey Southeast Asia graduates (front, l. to r.): **Chia Chue Yang**, **Chue Chang, Leng Yang** and **KouYang XioungHer**, with David and Jonah in the back. Two graduates are not pictured due to security concerns. ●

— Jewel Gingerich Longenecker



(Credit: Memee Yang)

area Mennonite churches. Her mentor was **Gloria Hernandez Bucher**, also of First Mennonite.

"Journey just fit me perfect," she said. "I could learn, but without the demands of seminary. I'm glad I did the program because it helped me to learn more and know more, and to grow as a person."

Janet said she enjoyed the learning aspects of the program and found the in-person Weekend Learning Events especially meaningful: "Those were very sacred times for me. I just appreciated that time and the camaraderie and community we built, and I still feel connected to my peers even though we don't meet anymore."

Participating in Journey helped Janet recognize that her gifts lie in caring for people. For her independent study (required of participants from CDC), she opted to focus on pastoral care and enjoyed visiting with a variety of people in her congregation.



**Ly Vang** of Kitchener, Ontario, has been involved in leadership for many years at First Hmong Mennonite Church in Kitchener (MCEC). She's been an elder, Sunday school director, treasurer and youth director, and has helped with Hmong women's ministries. She's currently a mission elder and helps support refugee families sponsored by the church. Ly's mentor was **Nancy Brubaker** (Certificate 1983) of First Mennonite Church in Kitchener (MCEC).

"The program helped me to see the history of Anabaptists and their suffering, how they have grown and how from generation to generation they're still growing," she reflected. "They have impacted the community. I feel like I had seen the

fruit [of the tree], but now I see people as a part of the root, and I see how strong it is and where it is holding the tree. It can bring blooms and beauty and bear fruit for others to eat. I see myself as part of the fruit and the leaves and the beauty of it.

"The program also helped me to see further who God is and who I am, and that being a Christian is not just believing the Word but doing the work."



**Beth Yoder** of Sioux Falls, South Dakota, is on the lay leadership team of Sermon on the Mount Mennonite Church in Sioux Falls (Central Plains Mennonite Conference, or CPMC). She plans and leads worship and leads the congregation in exploring new ways to relate to their community. Her mentors were **Jack** (MDiv 1982) and **Cathy Scandrett** of CPMC.

Professionally, she is a Life Skills Educator with two programs of Volunteers of America — working part time with homeless teenagers and part time with pregnant women and mothers in a chemical dependencies rehabilitation treatment center.

For Beth, whose family has a history of involvement in and leadership of the church, participating in Journey felt like "coming home."

"Being in the Journey program has solidified my passion for the church," she reflected. "It has helped me articulate my faith better. It has helped me articulate my sense of calling for myself and for the church and how the church can be relevant for our world. I now have confidence in myself as a leader, which I never thought of myself as before." ●

— Annette Brill Bergstresser

## 2022 Alumni Ministry and Service Recognition

### Gary Harder, Mesach Krisetya and Sarah Nahar

(Photos provided)



(l. to r.): Gary Harder, Mesach Krisetya, Sarah Nahar

**Gary Harder**, DMin, of Waterloo, Ontario, Canada; **Mesach Krisetya**, DMin, of Salatiga, Central Java, Indonesia; and **Sarah Nahar**, MDiv, of Elkhart, Indiana (traditional land of the

Potawatomi and Miami peoples); are the 2022 recipients of AMBS's Alumni Ministry and Service Recognition. All three earned a Master of Divinity: Gary in 1972, Mesach in 1973 and Sarah in 2011.

"Gary, Mesach and Sarah have touched so many lives through their ministries and involvements," said Alumni Director **Janeen Bertsche Johnson** (MDiv 1989). "They embody effective, visionary leadership and a commitment to sharing the peace of Jesus Christ in contexts around the world. We hope their stories inspire others to see seminary education as vital preparation for a lifetime of service."

Gary pastored for 37 years in total in congregations in Goshen, Indiana; Edmonton, Alberta; and Toronto, Ontario. After retiring from full-time ministry, he and his wife, **Lydia Neufeld Harder**, served as Intentional Interim Pastors at churches in Ontario and Québec for six years. Gary also was Chair of Canadian Mennonite Bible College (now University) in Winnipeg and held leadership roles

on commissions of the General Conference and the Conference of Mennonites in Canada.

Mesach, a longtime church leader, counselor, educator and administrator, passed away Sept. 30, 2022, at age 83. He had learned in June that he was to receive AMBS's alumni award. In October 2007, the Indonesian Department of Education conferred upon him the title of Professor of Theology and Pastoral Counseling in recognition of his pioneering work and contributions to pastoral counseling in Indonesia. Mesach also was Chair of the GKMI (Muria Christian Church of Indonesia) Synod multiple times between 1975 and 1999, and served Mennonite World Conference (1990–2003), first as an Executive Member and then as President.

Sarah was Outreach Coordinator and then Executive Director of Christian (now Community) Peacemaker Teams (2012–17). She has been an organizational consultant for the Martin Luther King, Jr., Center for Nonviolent Social Change in Atlanta and the revitalized Tolson Center for Community Excellence in Elkhart. She writes and presents on religion and ecology; nonviolent global liberation; environmental justice; and the human right to sanitation. In 2019, Sarah was a Rotary International Peace Fellow at Chulalongkorn University in Bangkok, Thailand. She is currently pursuing doctoral studies in Religion and Environmental Studies in Syracuse, New York.

Read more, view the reception recording and nominate a graduate for the 2023 award:  
[ambs.edu/alumni](http://ambs.edu/alumni) • — Annette Brill Bergstresser

## Employee transitions

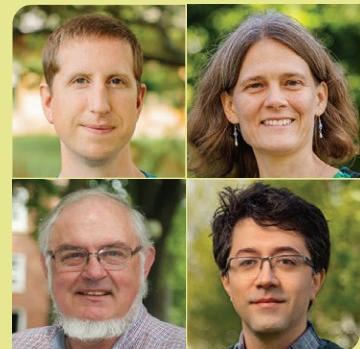
The AMBS learning community welcomed new employees in the second half of 2022:

- **Orion Blaha** began Aug. 15 as Assistant Director of Maintenance. He has served as a Systems Maintenance Technician and Facilities Engineer for Goshen (Indiana) College and as a General Contractor for Hope Builders in Elkhart.
- **Kajsa Herrstrom**, MSLIS (MDiv 2022), began Aug. 22 as Resource Access Librarian. She had served the library as a student employee and as Interim Librarian. She has worked in the University of Illinois Library and Champaign (Illinois) Public Library.

• **Paul A. Keim**, PhD (MDiv 1985), began Sept. 6 as half-time Student Services Coordinator. He has been a Core Adjunct Faculty member in the Bible Department since 2003. He has worked at Goshen College since 1997 and brings many years of academic and intercultural experience.

• **Luis Tapia Rubio** (MDiv 2021) began Nov. 15 as half-time Applied Leadership Curriculum Director. He has experience in pastoral ministry, administration, research and teaching, and he is pursuing a PhD.

Read more: [ambs.edu/news](http://ambs.edu/news)



(clockwise  
from top left):  
Orion, Kajsa,  
Luis and Paul

## Endowed scholarship carries on leadership legacy

**D**arrell Fast of Leamington, Ontario, Canada, loved to preach, teach, travel and grow through international experience. He earned a Bachelor of Divinity from AMBS in 1966 and subsequently served as a pastor in churches in Toronto and Leamington, Ontario; and North Newton, Kansas. He believed that pastoral ministry was a calling, for which AMBS provided a solid biblical foundation. He also understood the importance of mentoring potential pastors, having been nudged in that direction by a pastor in his youth.

Darrell served the wider church as AMBS Board Chair (1982–92); General Conference Mennonite Church Moderator (1992–99); and Mennonite

Church Eastern Canada Moderator (2003–06). After he died in June 2017 at age 77, his wife, **Loretta Fast**, and family established an endowed scholarship in his name to honor his commitment to

the church and to preparing pastoral leaders. The **Darrell W. Fast Scholarship** is for an AMBS student who intends to go into pastoral ministry and is a woman, BIPOC (Black, Indigenous and People of Color) or an international student.

Since its inception, the scholarship has supported three students. In 2022, to mark the five-year anniversary of Darrell's death, the family set a goal of raising an additional \$15,000 to cover 15

percent of the tuition cost for one student for one year.

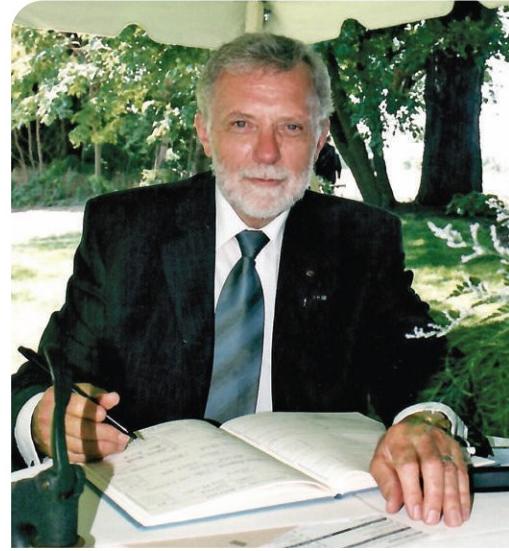
Darrell's scholarship is one of about 90 endowed scholarships at AMBS. Most students require financial aid, and most endowed scholarships are awarded based on need, not merit. Some endowed scholarships support up to three students each year.

All endowed scholarships work in the same way: after a donor gives a financial gift, AMBS invests the money in its endowment fund and uses regular payout to help students.

Endowing a full-tuition scholarship requires \$300,000; a half-tuition scholarship requires \$150,000; and a scholarship covering one-third of tuition requires \$100,000. It doesn't take that much to establish an endowed scholarship, though, and anyone can contribute to an existing one. The name of a benefactor can be added to an endowed scholarship once the fund reaches \$25,000.

To establish a new scholarship or contribute to an existing one, contact [development@ambs.edu](mailto:development@ambs.edu). We're grateful for all those who have contributed to endowed scholarships throughout AMBS's history in support of current and future leaders! •

— Bob Yoder, DMin, CFRM, Director of Development; and Heather Grennan Gary



Darrell Fast

(Photo provided)

“  
He understood the importance of mentoring potential pastors, having been nudged in that direction by a pastor in his youth.

## Thank you to our board members!

The AMBS Board of Directors comprises representatives of the seminary's sponsoring denominations (Mennonite Church USA and Mennonite Church Canada) and other constituencies. We're grateful to our board members for contributing their time, experience and expertise! (See [ambs.edu/board](http://ambs.edu/board).) New members, or those with new roles, include:

- **James Gunden** of Sellersville, Pennsylvania (board member 2018–22; Chair 2022–26); Zion Mennonite Church, Souderton; Mosaic Mennonite Conference

- **Terry Stefaniuk** of Hague, Saskatchewan (board member 2014–22; Vice Chair 2022–25); Osler Mennonite Church; Mennonite Church Saskatchewan
- **Paul Bergen** (MDiv 1999) of Sherwood Park, Alberta (2022–26); First Mennonite Church in Edmonton; Mennonite Church Alberta
- **Myrna Miller Dyck** (MDiv 2004) of Baden, Ontario (2022–26); Mennonite Church Eastern Canada



(clockwise from top left): James, Terry, Myrna and Paul

# GRADUATE CERTIFICATES

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(at right): Carrie Mast, Graduate Certificate student from Bluffton, Ohio



(Credit: Jason Bryant)

## UPCOMING OFFERINGS

### Online Short Courses

- **Transforming Congregational Conflict and Communication**

April 12 – May 23, with  
Betty Pries, PhD

- **Resisting Christian Nationalism with the Gospel of Peace**

April 12 – May 9, with Drew  
Strait, PhD

Register by March 22 to save \$50!  
[ambs.edu/online-short-courses](http://ambs.edu/online-short-courses)

### Invite AMBS

Faculty members are available to speak on trauma-informed caregiving, undoing racism, intercultural competence, improvisational leadership and more. Ask about virtual visits!

[ambs.edu/invite](http://ambs.edu/invite)

### Journey: A Missional Leadership Development Program

This distance-friendly undergraduate-level program offers mentor-mentee partnerships and community support.  
[ambs.edu/journey](http://ambs.edu/journey)

### Ministry Integrity Circles

Pastors, need help with ministry transitions or significant challenges? This program provides the support of consultants within a community of peers. The Spring 2023 cohort, which starts March 27, will meet via Zoom and is free to participants. Apply by Feb. 27. [ambs.edu/integrity-circles](http://ambs.edu/integrity-circles)

### Pastors & Leaders 2023

Feb. 13–16: Reimagining Ministry  
[ambs.edu/pastors-and-leaders](http://ambs.edu/pastors-and-leaders)

### Rooted and Grounded

Conference on Land and Christian Discipleship: Sept. 28–30. Pathways through Climate Doom: Resistance and Resilience  
[ambs.edu/rooted-and-grounded](http://ambs.edu/rooted-and-grounded)

### Free journals online

- *Vision: A Journal for Church and Theology* 23.2 (Fall 2022): "Spirituality and Aging"  
[ambs.edu/vision](http://ambs.edu/vision)
- *Anabaptist Witness* 9.2 (October 2022): "Mission and Health"  
[anabaptistwitness.org](http://anabaptistwitness.org)

### Intensive Term courses

#### Hybrid courses

(Online work: May 8 – July 21;  
Hybrid Week on campus: June 5–10)

- Ethics and Care: Living and Dying with Purpose
- Preaching

#### Campus courses (open to auditors)

- Practicing and Embodying Nonviolence: May 8–25
- The Spirit World and the Global Church: May 18–26
- The Religious Other in the Bible: June 12–23

Nonadmitted students get 50% off their first three credit hours.

[ambs.edu/upcoming-courses](http://ambs.edu/upcoming-courses)

### You can afford seminary!

AMBS's generous need-based financial aid, scholarships and church matching grants can help you study either on campus or at a distance, full time or part time. Apply for merit-based scholarships by March 15 and ministry scholarships by April 1.

[ambs.edu/tuition](http://ambs.edu/tuition)